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General Assembly
Sixty-eighth session

Official Records

106th plenary meeting
Monday, 8 September 2014, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Ashe ..... (Antigua and Barbuda)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 123 (*continued*)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

The President: Members will recall that the Assembly considered this item jointly with agenda item 29, entitled "Report of the Security Council", at its 46th, 47th, 48th and 49th plenary meetings, on 7 and 8 November 2013. Members will also recall that, pursuant to decision 67/561, of 29 August 2013, the Assembly continued intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform in informal plenary meetings during the current session.

In a letter dated 6 August 2014, I circulated for consideration by Member States language for a draft oral decision on this important issue.

May I now therefore take it that the General Assembly decides:

"To reaffirm the central role of the General Assembly on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council;

"To immediately continue intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform in an informal plenary of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session, as mandated by General Assembly decisions 62/557 of 15 September 2008, 63/565 B of 14 September 2009, 64/568 of 13 September 2010, 65/554 of 12 September 2011, 66/566 of 13 September 2012 and 67/561 of 29 August 2013, building on the informal meetings held during its sixty-eighth session, as well as the positions of and proposals made by Member States, while welcoming the active engagement, initiatives and intensive efforts of the President of the General Assembly, and taking note of the previous proposals of the Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations, and noting with appreciation his active role and concrete efforts, including the preparation of the text reflecting the positions of and proposals submitted by Member States, with a view to an early comprehensive reform of the Security Council;

"To convene the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council during the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, if Member States so decide; and, finally,

"To include in the agenda of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly an item entitled 'Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Security Council'"?

The draft oral decision was adopted (decision 68/557).

The President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of position, may I remind delegations

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that explanations of position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Yoshikawa (Japan): I have no comment on decision 68/557, which has just been adopted, but as the representative of Japan I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to you, Mr. President, for your leadership. Your genuine efforts to achieve progress on the issue of Security Council reform have led us to concrete results. In October of last year you appointed an advisory group consisting of six Permanent Representatives of Member States, which produced a valuable non-paper that played a useful role in the deliberations of the intergovernmental negotiations. Your leadership helped our Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations, Ambassador Tanin of Afghanistan, to produce an assessment of the negotiations in July.

I would like to highlight the importance of carrying over your achievement to the General Assembly's forthcoming sixty-ninth session, which will be presided over by the former Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uganda, His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa. Building on the momentum you have created, Sir, negotiations based on a text should be launched as soon as possible. Let us cooperate with all Member States to that end.

Mr. Cardi (Italy): I would like to join with my Japanese colleague, and no doubt with others, in commending you on the work you have done, Mr. President, and to refer once again, as we have done in previous meetings, to your statement during last year's annual debate on Security Council reform (see A/68/PV.46), when you called for a true negotiating spirit and underlined the need for flexibility and compromise. I would like to quote once again a statement you made during that meeting:

> "Our United Nations is and must remain a place where we collectively reach compromise, a place of accommodation. The essence of the process of negotiations is compromise. Each and every side on that question must make concessions if we are to find an acceptable common ground." (*A/68/PV.46, p. 2*)

The essence of the process of negotiations is compromise. Each and every side on that question must make concessions if we are to find acceptable common ground.

By recalling that the intergovernmental negotiations of this session were productive in some respects and showed some flexibility, compromise and willingness, allow me to recall that Uniting for Consensus is the group that has fully embraced those principles, giving concrete proof of its flexibility and spirit of compromise with two officially submitted reform proposals — one in 2005 and the other in 2009 — to accommodate the legitimate positions of the other negotiating groups.

The process of Security Council reform is crucial to the future of the United Nations. The President of the General Assembly has the vital task of identifying the points of convergence and avoiding points of divergence, while paying due attention to the sensibilities of the whole membership.

Bearing in mind the negotiating spirit that you, Mr. President, called for and which we have followed, Uniting for Consensus will ensure its fullest cooperation with the new President of the General Assembly towards achieving a comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

Mr. Mukerji (India): I would like to explain our position with respect to decision 68/557, which the Assembly has just adopted and which you, Mr. President, very kindly read out for us.

I would like to refer, in that context, to some of the sentiments and words that you, Sir, yourself used in your acceptance speech, in July 2013, on the subject of Security Council reform when you promised to "strive to reinvigorate, advance and ... conclude discussions on the reform" (*A/67/PV.87, p. 4*) of the principal organs of the United Nations. You said that you recognized the odds, but that you would still do so. Later, in your inaugural address, in September 2013, you had said that it was "simply unacceptable to do nothing", that doing nothing would be "an immense disservice to the peoples of the world, who rely on us and look to us with a sense of hope and possibility." (*A/68/PV.1, p. 3*)

Yet you, Mr. President, have today presented us with a decision that is no different from that adopted (decision 67/561) a year ago. Our delegation and a majority of the rest had invested time, energy and resources to assist you in advancing our commonly agreed goal during the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

Ironically, we find that there actually had been progress, most notably in the form of the non-paper prepared under your leadership, Sir. It is in fact the non-paper that provided the structure to the six meetings of the intergovernmental negotiations in which the membership of the General Assembly participated. We

are surprised and even dismayed that there has been no reference to the non-paper in the rollover decision presented by you. We will of course draw our own conclusions on why that is so, but your words of last July and September resonate in our minds even today.

In conclusion, I would like to say that we are incurable optimists. We believe that just like the turnstiles that have now been removed at the entrance of our main building, the last obstacles to the negotiation text in the intergovernmental negotiations will be removed under the dynamic visionary leadership of our President-elect, His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa, former Foreign Minister of Uganda, and we will have a clear road map to Security Council reform in the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Patriota (Brazil): Thank you, Mr. President, for your statement, your leadership and your commitment to move the process forward.

As highlighted in the group of four letter addressed to you, Mr. President, on 15 August, we would like to reaffirm our view that rollover decision 68/557, which was just adopted and is a mere repetition of last year's language, does not recognize your significant legacy nor the efforts of the Chairman Ambassador Zahir Tanin. Your presidency will be remembered as a moment in which the membership advanced towards the goal of reforming the Security Council. The non-paper produced by your team of advisers, in which I had the honour to take part, and endorsed by you, is now a widely recognized tool to frame our discussions. We encourage delegations to use it in the upcoming round of negotiations.

There seems to be a prevailing view among Member States that the Security Council is not responding satisfactorily to specific crises around the world, and a growing sense of frustration arises from a widely perceived dysfunctionality of the body. If we leave things as they are, we run the risk of bringing discredit and erosion of authority to the United Nations in a core area of its mandate. The year 2015 will mark 50 years since the first and only time the Security Council was expanded, and 10 years after the 2005 World Summit, when our leaders unanimously called for an early reform of the Security Council.

As Ambassador Tanin has rightly recognized in his assessment of the current state of play, the seventieth anniversary of the Organization will provide a tremendous opportunity for achieving much-needed reform. It is therefore imperative that, in order to produce tangible results by next year, we start the first meeting of the next round of negotiations with a text on the table.

Mr. Schieb (Germany): I would like to second the points made earlier by the Permanent Representatives of Japan, India and Brazil.

Let me add to that our gratitude to you, Mr. President, and your team for your leadership and genuine efforts to help us achieve long-overdue progress on Security Council reform. We, the group of four countries, took note in our letter to you of 15 August that the rollover decision 68/557 was a mere verbatim repetition of last year's decision 67/561.

It may only be a sign of your modesty, Mr. President, that you did not want to highlight more prominently your personal role and achievements. In our view, however, that does not adequately reflect your valuable contributions. Other speakers have mentioned the advisory group and the non-paper, as well as the Chairman's assessment.

I wish to add to that the strong sense of urgency felt among the majority of Member States that, with the year 2015 fast approaching, we need to recommit ourselves to finally break the deadlock. Against that background, it is even more important that we commence the new round of intergovernmental negotiations as early as possible and on the basis of a genuine negotiation text. I therefore encourage you, Sir, to ensure that the positive momentum that you have created is carried over into the new intergovernmental round.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Oral decision 68/557, which was just adopted by the General Assembly to smoothly carry over the intergovernmental negotiations to the next session, reflects the common interest and a general consensus of Member States.

During the intergovernmental negotiations at this session, Member States had extensive and in-depth exchanges of views with regard to the reform of the Security Council. It is regrettable that views on reform diverge significantly. Our next step should be to engage in democratic and extensive consultations so as to meet each other halfway, work to build consensus, seek a comprehensive solution and reach the broadest possible agreement, while taking into consideration the concerns and interests of all parties.

We hope to work with other Member States to find a solution to the issue of comprehensive reform that

is in the common interests of all Member States and beneficial to the long-term interests of the Organization.

Ms. Mejía Velez (Columbia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for having convened this meeting of the General Assembly on the "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters". As Ambassador Cardi of Italy did on behalf of the members of the Uniting for Consensus group, I also would like to express my delegation's gratitude for your work during the tenth round of negotiations on this agenda item. I am expecially grateful for your call, Sir, for genuine negotiations with flexibility and willingness in considering the various views, as United for Consensus has done.

We should like to reiterate the positive and open outlook of our group, which put forward two previous reform proposals, in 2005 and 2009, that took into account the proposals from the various groups. You, Sir, can always count on our support to cooperate and to bring about the reform that the international community so needs.

Mr. Pankin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to join the positive assessments of your efforts, Sir, as the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session. In particular, we would like to thank you for preparing the draft of decision 68/557, which was just adopted as an oral decision. It will help to open up the path towards reform of the Security Council at the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly without excessive politicization or the creation of new dividing lines among the participants of the intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform.

The current session of rounds on reform of the Security Council was interesting, but it confirmed that we have not yet reached convergence on a universal reform that allows us for the broadest possible support. Clearly, given the great political significance of Security Council reform, there is a need to continue this search for such a reform decision, which would make it possible to achieve, if not consensus, then at least the support of a far broader number of Member States than the formal necessary two thirds of the majority of the General Assembly. Such work needs to be carried out calmly, transparently and inclusively, without establishing any artificial time frames.

Mr. Masood Khan (Pakistan): Pakistan aligns itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Italy on behalf of the Uniting for Consensus group.

Today under your leadership, Sir, the General Assembly has taken a prudent and wise decision. We too pay tribute to you for playing a dynamic role in trying to break the long-standing impasse on Security Council reform. You took initiatives, but you also very wisely recognized the political realities on the ground.

Intergovernmental negotiation is a membership-driven process, based on positions and proposals of Member States and groups. The process has to be pursued in good faith and in an open, inclusive and transparent manner, with the objective of seeking a solution that can garner the widest possible political acceptance by Member States. That be achieved only through flexibility based on respect for a difference of opinion. We must also remain mindful of the fact that this particular agenda item relates equally to the increase in the membership of the Security Council and to equitable representation.

The objective of the intergovernmental negotiations therefore remains a comprehensive reform of the Security Council through a negotiated solution that corresponds to the interests of all Members. That overarching objective cannot be made subservient to individual aspirations.

We believe that, as we lay out down the basis of our next work for next year, we must begin with a spirit of compromise and flexibility. Any divisiveness at this stage will not be helpful for our future work. Next year let us work together as one body. We should start talking to each other instead of talking past each other.

Finally, we look forward to working under the able leadership of the incoming President of the General Assembly.

Mr. Beck (Solomon Islands): We would join others in commending you, Mr. President, on your leadership on this particularly important subject. We would like to recognize the momentum that you have built in terms of moving the negotiations forward on this particular matter. We sincerely hope that we will move into the next session with a common interpretation and understanding that we will build on the work that you have done.

You, Sir, have more or less created momentum in terms of the non-paper. We continue to feel that it should filter into the next session. We hope that, with this understanding, we can all agree on moving forward in our work to make progress with regard to our multilateral principal organ.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position. Let me thank all those who took the time. I also welcome all the comments that have been made, some of which were extremely pointed. In fact, I recall hearing some of the words I spoke a very long time ago attributed to me in case I forgot — which is probably not the case. I could not help but reflect on the literary figure of Don Quixote, and thinking that maybe I was tilting at windmills way back when.

We have come to the end of another round of meetings, the tenth so far of our intergovernmental negotiations on agenda item 123, entitled "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters". As is usually the case on such occasions, we can and should assess where we are, and, I hope, dare to wish for a far more productive future.

Member States will recall that on my election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session, in July 2013, I indicated (see A/67/PV.87) that I would seek to advance discussions on reform of the Organization's principal organs, including the Security Council. In taking up that issue, members will recall the procedural morass — I dare say, mistrust — that served as a backdrop. There was a great need for a fresh approach due in part to the fact that the sixty-seventh session had ended without any clear indication of the next steps in the important question of Security Council reform. Amid that challenging context, I held a wide variety of consultations with the Member States in order to ascertain the state of thinking on the question of Security Council reform, with no illusions whatsoever concerning the magnitude and complexity of the task.

Accordingly, I set about taking practical steps beginning with the designation of a member of my Cabinet, Ambassador Noel Sinclair, my Deputy Chef de Cabinet, to serve as a focal point for the Member States on this agenda item. I subsequently composed an advisory group of Permanent Representatives from six Member States, whose membership, in my view, reflected the various opinions on this matter, and whose sole task was to provide me with clear-cut advice on possible next steps.

That advisory group produced a report in the form of a non-paper which, in keeping with my pledge of transparency, I distributed immediately to Member States. A memorandum from one member of the group who wished to separate himself from the outcome and the process undertaken to reach it was included with that report.

The views on the non-paper are clearly mixed, but I am thankful to Member States that see some merit in the document in the context of the continuing work of the intergovernmental negotiations on the basis of decision 62/557. That document remains in the possession of Member States. Again, in a pledge of transparency, I wish to inform members that it is my intent to communicate the non-paper to my successor for his consideration.

Most recently, the Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations, Ambassador Tanin of Afghanistan, to whom I wish to convey my thanks and appreciation, provided, at my request, his written assessment of the round in the larger context of the overall engagement on the question of Security Council reform. Again, that assessment was made available to Member States. I hope that they find it useful in future sessions of the negotiations. I also wish to inform Member States that it is my intent to convey that assessment to my successor for his consideration.

In my view, Ambassador Tanin's assessment underscores the complexity and sensitivity of the process of Security Council reform. It would be foolhardy of us to underestimate the challenges inherent in any future negotiations on that issue. Yet it should not be one from which we shy away. For if we are serious about Security Council reform, we must be able to face those challenges and agree on a process that will allow for a good-faith exchange of views in a spirit of give-and-take and with a shared determination to achieve results that are generally acceptable to all sides. Given the magnitude of the task, that must be both a collective as well as a timely endeavour.

I sincerely hope that the conclusions that we have arrived at during the sixty-eighth session have given renewed momentum to the work of the intergovernmental negotiations. I also believe that Member States owe it to themselves to ensure that the progress achieved so far is not halted or reversed. I urge them to capitalize

on that progress so as to ensure that it represents a basis for the continuation of their endeavours during the sixty-ninth session, with a view to achieving the ultimate goal of starting the process of negotiations. When all is said and done, negotiations remain the only viable framework in which Member States can make the necessary accommodations among the differences in their various positions. I therefore urge members to arrive at that collective decision sooner rather than later.

Similarly, it goes without saying that, for any negotiations, a basic text on which there is sufficiently broad but not necessarily universal agreement to proceed should be the desired goal. In keeping with the intergovernmental nature of Security Council reform process, it is, of course, the responsibility of Member States, and theirs alone, to determine what that text is.

In the spirit of the foregoing considerations, we have adopted the carry-over decision 68/557, which, in my humble opinion, clears the way for a smooth and uneventful start to the work of building on what has so far been achieved. It is a decision that is scrupulously devoid of any elements that might be considered prejudicial to any side in those negotiations.

That decision, I believe, was necessary. I wish all success to my successor, the President of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session, as he continues the process. I hope that it will be endowed with special importance.

I now give the floor to the representative of Algeria on a point of order.

Mr. Moktefi (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): I apologize in advance for taking the floor. It was not expected but my delegation was compelled to respond following your statement, Mr. President. Before sharing my point of view, like the speakers before me, allow me to thank you, Sir, for all your efforts in trying to move forward the Security Council reform process.

However, my delegation would like to recall that decision 68/557, adopted by consensus, is a similar text to that of last year and does not include a reference to any document. Nevertheless, in your statement, Mr. President, you expressed your intention to submit to the next President of the General Assembly two documents, namely, the non-paper of the advisory group and the assessment made by the Chair of the intergovernmental negotiations. In that regard, my delegation wishes to recall that there is no consensus on the issue and that the two documents reflect the divergent positions of Member States of the issue of reform. Let that be clear. That is a clarification from the Algerian delegation.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 123?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 3.35 p.m.